

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 QUITO 05770 140031Z

64

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-02 IO-13 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

/070 W

----- 123169

O P 140002Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1172

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5770

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC EC PFOR PINT

SUBJ: AMERICAN CLERGYMEN DETAINED BY GOE

REF: QUITO 5731

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: CONSUL AND POLOFF VISITED THE FIVE
DETAINED AMERICAN CLERGYMEN MORNING OF AUGUST 13A AT THE
QUITO MILITARY BARRACKS WHERE THEY ARE HELD. THEY IN-
FORMED EMBOFFS THAT THEY HAD BEEN TAKEN AT GUN POINT
FROM THEIR MEETING PLACE IN RIOBAMBA THE EVENING OF
AUGUST 12 AND DRIVEN TO QUITO BY BUS, ARRIVING THE SAME
EVENING. ALL FIVE ARE IN GOOD HEALTH AND GOOD SPIRITS
EXCEPT FOR STRONG INDIGNATION AT THE GOE'S ACTION. THEY
HAVE NOT BEEN INFORMED BY THE GOE AS TO WHY THEY WERE
ARRESTED. THE AMBASSADOR HAS URGED THE MINGOV THAT THE
PRIESTS BE ALLOWED TO STAY IN A HOTEL AND MAKE THEIR OWN
TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. CONSUL AND POLOFF VISITED FIVE DETAINED AMERICAN
PRELATES MORNING OF AUGUST 13 AT THE QUITO POLICE
BARRACKS WHERE THEY ARE HELD. ACCORDING TO THE DETAINEES,
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 QUITO 05770 140031Z

ALL WERE PARTICIPATING IN A PURELY PASTORAL MEETING IN

RIOBAMBA WHICH BEGAN AUGUST 9. THEY TOLD EMBOFFS THAT AT APPROXIMATELY 5 P.M. THE AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 12, 30 HEAVILY-ARMED PLAINCLOTHES POLICEMEN BURST INTO THEIR MEETING PLACE AND ORDERED ALL PRESENT TO IMMEDIATELY BOARD WAITINGBUSES. THEY WERE NOT ALLOWED TO GATHER UP PERSONAL EFFECTS OR PASSPORTS AND ALL PROGRAM DOCUMENTS WERE SEIZED BY THE POLICE.

3. AFTER A FIVE-HOUR BUS RIDE THE GROUP WAS INSTALLED IN A LARGE ROOM IN THE QUITO POLICE BARRACKS. THEY WERE OFFERED A TOTAL OF 24 BEDS FOR APPROXIMATELY 50 DETAINEES, BUT THE GROUP PREFERRED TO REMAIN TOGETHER IN A SINGLE LARGE ROOM. ALL ARE BEING TREATED WELL EXCEPT NONE HAS BEEN TOLD THE REASON FOR THIS DETENTION NOR WHEN RELEASE CAN BE EXPECTED.

4. THE AMERICAN DETAINEES (OTHERS BEING HELD REPORTEDLY REPRESENT 14 OTHER COUNTRIES), CONSIDERING THE MANNER OF THEIR ARREST, ARE REMARKABLY CALM AND ARE PATIENTLY AWAITING DEVELOPMENTS, BUT THEY ARE INDIGNANT THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF ECUADOR WOULD SO INTERRUPT A MEETING WHICH THEY REGARD AS ROUTINE AND LEGITIMATE. THEY SAY THAT THE US AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAVE BEEN INSULTED BY THIS ACTION AND PROMISE TO TAKE STRONG MEASURES IN THE US TO PROTEST THEIR TREATMENT.

5. THE AMERICANS TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THE APOSTOLIC DELEGATE (APPARENTLY THE PAPAL NUNCIO) HAD VISITED THEM EARLY THE MORNING OF AUGUST 13 AND HAD INFORMED THEM THAT THEY WERE NOT UNDER ARREST BUT WERE RATHER "GUESTS OF THE GOVERNMENT." EMBOFFS SPECIFICALLY ASKED THE POLICE BARRACKS COMMANDER IF THE DETAINEES WERE UNDER ARREST. HE RESPONDED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW. EMBOFFS THEN ASKED IF THE DETAINED AMERICANS WERE FREE TO LEAVE. THE COMMANDER REPLIED, "NOT FROM HERE BUT FROM THE COUNTRY, AND SOON."

6. THE DETAINEES FROM THE RIOBAMBA MEETING INCLUDED ALL PRESENT IN THE MEETING HALL, INCLUDING THE COOK AND THE CHARFORCE. ECUADOREAN BISHOP LEONIDAS PROANO WAS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 QUITO 05770 140031Z

TAKEN FROM THE POLICE BUS SHORTLY BEFORE ITS ARRIVAL IN QUITO AND HE IS DETAINED SEPARATELY IN THE SAME LOCATION.

7. THE AMERICAN DETAINEES IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS/ PAUL SEVILLA, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE US CATHOLIC CONFERENCE, WASHINGTON, D.C.; PATRICIO FLORES, BISHOP OF SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS; ROBERTO SANCHEZ, ARCHBISHOP

OF SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO; GILBERTO CHAVEZ, BISHOP IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA; JUAN ARZUBE, BISHOP IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA. ALL EXCEPT ARZUBE PLANNED TO LEAVE ECUADOR ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 15. ARZUBE IS AN ECUADOREAN-BORN US NATURALIZED CITIZEN WHO HAD INTENDED TO VISIT HIS SISTER IN GUAYAQUIL UNTIL AUGUST 26.

8. IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE ACTING MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 13, THE AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT INASMUCH AS THESE INDIVIDUALS WERE NOT UNDER ARREST, AND GIVEN THEIR STATUS AS CLERGYMEN, THAT THEY BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE MILITARY BARRACKS AND STAY IN LOCAL HOTELS UNTIL THEIR DEPARTURE. THE MINISTER REPLIED THAT THAT WOULD BE AGREEABLE PROVIDED THEY MADE NO DECLARATIONS TO THE PRESS.

9. THE CONSUL IS AGAIN VISITING THE FIVE US. CITIZENS THIS AFTERNOON AND HE WILL SEE WHETHER (A) THEY WISH TO GO TO HOTELS AND (B) WHETHER THEY ARE, IN FACT, FREE TO DO SO.

10. EMBASSY WILL REPORT DEVELOPMENTS AS THEY OCCUR.
BLOOMFIELD

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTION, RELIGIOUS LEADERS, MEETINGS, POLITICAL PRISONERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976QUITO05770
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760312-0807
From: QUITO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760855/aaaabvwe.tel
Line Count: 138
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 QUITO 5731
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <27 OCT 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMERICAN CLERGYMEN DETAINED BY GOE
TAGS: CASC, PFOR, PINT, EC, US, (SEVILLA, PAUL), (FLORES, PATRICO), (SANCHEZ, ROBERTO), (CHAVEZ, GILBERTO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006